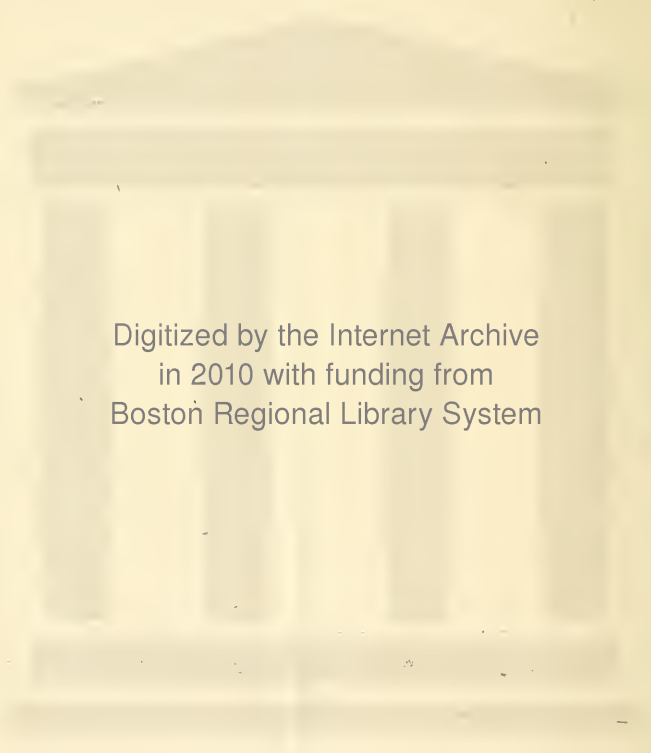


Rev A. W. Burnham
BrIDGE
N. Hampshire

A DISCOURSE
ON THE
CHARACTER AND DEATH
OF
MRS. CLARINDA C. HOUGH,
WIFE OF
HON. WILLIAM JERVIS HOUGH,

Recess 4 1/2" x 18"
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Life a Vapour.

A REVISED DISCOURSE
COMMEMORATIVE
OF THE
CHARACTER AND DEATH
OF
MRS. CLARINDA C. HOUGH,
WIFE OF
HON. WILLIAM JERVIS HOUGH,
DELIVERED IN THE
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LIFE A VAPOUR.

“ For what is your life ?
It is even a vapour that appeareth for a
Little time and then vanisheth away.”

James iv ; 14.

This language is highly figurative, and when considered in its simple and appropriate sense, contains an affecting lesson on the shortness and uncertainty of human life.

In the preceding verse we are appropriately admonished not to presume on length of days, and consequently not to promise ourselves certain opportunities for the promotion of plans which involve future time.

The current of time sweeps on admonishing and engulfing man, with all his possessions, plans and hopes. Generation after generation is borne away to join the great congregation of the dead.

“ The seas shall waste, the skies to smoke decay,
Rocks fall to dust and mountains melt away.”

Nature has her times and seasons. Throughout her inanimate and irrational kingdoms, bloom and decay, youth and age, life and death, succeed each other at

periods that can be foreseen and calculated, but “Ye know neither the day nor the hour when the son of man cometh.”

Who then shall presume to count on time he knows not of?

“Go, too, now, ye that say, to-day or to-morrow, we will go into such a city and continue there a year, and buy and sell and get gain; Ye know not what shall be on the morrow.”

Here presumption on a precarious life, for the prosecution of schemes which look forward to months and years to come, is faithfully rebuked, as we cannot tell how suddenly, nor under what circumstances of solemnity and terror, death may overtake us.

At the time when the Apostle James addressed this epistle “to the twelve tribes who were scattered abroad” commerce in merchandise, was pursued or carried on upon migratory principles; it being then the custom of merchants to trade in portable commodities from one city to another, even to far distant regions of the earth, in the pursuit of gain.

Many of the Jews, “the twelve tribes,” to whom the Apostle inscribed the Epistle before us, were engaged in this migratory trade. Hence for men the most affluent and deeply engaged in schemes of worldliness, which involved future and uncertain time, to make their graves away from home and friends, and all the endearments of social and domestic life, was as we may conclude no uncommon event.

Like multitudes at the present time, they hurried on through the bustling scenes of business or pleasure, unheeded by the fate of others, who fell often and sud-

denly around them, until the king of terrors summoned them to bow down beneath his palsying scepter.

How reasonable then to the living,

“ Who counting on long years

Of profit there,

Were quite unfurnished for

A world to come,”

^{was} were the admonition of the Apostle.

“ Go, to now, ye that say, to-day or to-morrow, we will go into such a city and continue there a year, and buy and sell and get gain. For ye know not what shall be on the morrow.”

Hence it becomes every prudent man and woman, every discrete youth, to take some account of that only event *death*, which is sure to all.

Man lives and does his work ; fulfills his mission and passes away.

“ For what is your life ?” a *vapour* not a *star*, nor a *planet*, that is often obscured or hidden from the human eye, and yet exists, and appears again ; but a vapour. *Atmis*, in the significant expression of the original Greek ; *Atmis*, a *vapour*, that appeareth for a little time and then vanisheth away.

Such is the shortness and uncertainty of human life and teaches us that “ Man cometh forth also as a shadow and continueth not.” Thus is it with all the family of man. The morning is full of happy plans and bright visions ; at night the cry goes forth “ make ready the shroud ; prepare the pall.” Surely, “ in the midst of life we are in death.”

Who in this assembly has not drank the cup of sorrow, at the dying beds and the graves of friends departed ? Friends ! departed friends !

O, yes, and those to, that were near and much beloved, whose presence was the joy and solace of life, but alas! whose departure to the spirit land, has rendered this empty world more empty still, and opened such fountains of mourning and anguish in our hearts, as nothing earthly can reach and heal. Their once cheerful countenances, on which we looked with emotions of pleasure ; how fresh, how attractive, even now, before the eye of our memory.

Our friends departed ! Their once inviting voices, “like the music of carroll,” to which we often listened with delight, now lost in the reigning silence of the tomb. Yet with what sweet harmonies, they seem to press upon the memory, and wake up the tenderest sensibilities of the soul. But when I reflect on the many avenues by which the breath of life may at any time be expelled, rendering the “harp of life tuneless,” I can but regard them as warnings, that with us, all the sands of life are fast running out ; “the days of privilege fast drawing to a close, and with some of us, this may be the last.

“Death rides on every passing breeze,
And lurks in every flower ;
Each season hath its own disease
Its peril—every hour.

Our eyes have seen the rosy light,
Of youth’s soft cheek decay ;
And fate descried in sudden night,
On manhood’s middle day.

Our eyes have seen, the steps of age,
Halt feebly to the tomb ;
And yet, shall earth our hearts engage,
In dreams of days to come ?

Bridget Heber

Turn, mortal! turn! thy danger know ;
 Where'er thy foot can tread,
 The earth rings hollow from below,
 And warns thee of her dead."

"The earth rings hollow!" Our earthly house may be dissolved at any moment. "All flesh is grass, and all the goodness thereof as the flower of the field." "Like leaves on trees, the race of man is found. Now green in youth, now withering on the ground. Another race the following spring supplies. They fall successive and successive rise. So generations in their course decay. So flourish these when those are passed away." Death chooses all seasons for its prey; the cradle is his; childhood and youth are his; the prime of manhood and tottering age are his. "We know neither the day nor the hour, when the son of man cometh."

Let me then impressively urge you all to live prepared for the sudden sundering of all the domestic and social ties of life.

But I need not enlarge on a topic so painful. The lesson which it so impressively teaches, on the shortness and uncertainty of human life, "is graven on our hearts as with the point of a diamond, and as lead in the rock forever."

"Our fathers where are they? And the Prophets, do they live forever? And where are the generations of our once living ancestors, that exist now but of history. Where are they? Echo returns the inquiry, "where, where are they."

And can we answer where? Their forms among us are "like Angels visits, few and far between," for they

have mostly, if not all, fled away from the precincts of time and mortality and hidden themselves amidst the deep silence and dreary shadows of the tomb.

How mournfully true is the record of facts that is engraven upon our memories ; as in thought we travel back to the scenes through which we have passed since entering upon the eventful journey of life, we find enough in what we have witnessed to convince us that even the wisest and the best of the family that fell in paradise, have no certain abiding place on earth, that “ the tall, the wise, the revered head must lie as low ” as the head of the peasant and of the beggar.

Time has prepared a common and certain level for all, and on it the hand of the great destroyer has laid the much loved companion of my youth ! “ She hath given up the ghost ; her sun has gone down while it was yet day,” and “ the mourners have gone about the streets.”

How striking, how consoling it is to call to recollection that she, so long and so recently with me here, so beloved, but now so totally withdrawn and absent ; that *she* was once the intimate friend and much attached gentle and loving fellow christian of her whose excellent character and lamented death, we this evening, memorialize.

Their acquaintance commenced at an early period ; the latter then becoming one of my intelligent and attentive parishioners.

And now how delightful it is to be assured, on the authority of revelation, of the reunion of these, who have “ loved one another and their Lord on earth,” where we, their kindred, hope e’re long to meet their

pure and holy spirits, and with them, hold sweet counsel and sympathy in the presence, fear and love of God, never more to say farewell.

How consoling, then, it is to recall to memory, events in the life of departed friends which go to make up the character, as worthy examples for the living, such a character vanisheth not away as a vapour and is not, but abideth as a star to the "Shepherds" of "Bethlehem." And it is with lively satisfaction, and I doubt not, with approval, that I now attempt to recount some of the events in the life, and to lay, at least, one spotless flower, one laurel leaf, in the casket which contains all of earth that remains of her whose life with us has appeared for a little time, and like a vapour vanished away.

Mrs. Hough was the daughter of Ezekiel Carpenter, Esq., formerly of Adams, Mass. She was born in that town, Nov. 12, 1799, from whence she came with her father's family, in 1804, to Cazenovia, a village famed for its beauty and the intelligence of its inhabitants.

After there enjoying superior advantages for education which she improved with surprising diligence and success; and walking in the light of a cultivated christian home, until in her 22d year, she was united in marriage, (in 1821,) with Gen. Hough, then a young man of promise, who had entered successfully upon the profession of law.

For some time preceding their marriage, General Hough had been an accepted and pleasant member of my family, which of course brought her to an immediate acquaintance with us. And this, her first appearance among us, as a youthful, blooming bride, and all

the circumstances connected with her introduction are as fresh in my memory as the events of yesterday, indeed, the impressions made by her personal comeliness, her conversational powers and ladylike demeanor made a deep impression on the minds of all who had the pleasure of her acquaintance. Three years previous to this, and in 1818, she became the hopeful subject of renewing grace, publicly professed her faith in the Redeemer, and united with the Presbyterian Church, in Cazenovia, then under the pastoral care of Rev. Dr. Brown. From that period to the close of her active and useful life, she was recognized by all who knew her as a consistent exemplary christian, "adorning" in a peculiar sense, "the doctrine which is according to godliness."

But her *outward* walk and conversation, as a professed believer in the gospel of salvation, were not all that pertained to her christian character. She greatly delighted in the study of the Scriptures, and in prayerful and deep research into the theory, or if you please, the science of revealed religion. While its profound and sacred mysteries were no obstacles to the lively actings of her faith. She maintained clear and consistent views of its doctrines and duties, never swerving from the plain announcement of the Scriptures respecting either; when she could not "comprehend the breadth and length, the depth and height" of things revealed in the sacred volume, she made it her duty as well as privilege to "stand in the ways and see and ask for the old paths and walk therein." She was, in short, peculiarly a *Bible Christian*, of the Puritan stamp; unlike many women professing godliness at the pres-

ent day, who are "tossed to and fro, and carried about by every wind of doctrine."

She was not only a Bible Christian, but an admirable Christian lady, regarding principle and character in her sex more than the ruling parades and fashions of the day. O! that others like her might in numbers arise to adorn the palaces of our Zion in the land.

In the management of her domestic concerns, she was a model well worthy of imitation. In this department of duty she seemed to inherit much of the character of "the wise woman" of Solomon, so admirably described in his book of Proverbs.

Along with the perfection of her domestic management, "she reared and nurtured a family of children with a true mother's care, in the fear of God, and in the performance of those duties which chasten the heart, discipline the character and fit youth for the enjoyment of such measures of happiness," as earth is adapted to impart.

Indeed, none who knew her elevated walk of purity, and calm, and self possessed firmness of character, could doubt that "she was a Lady of highly cultivated intellect, and of great elegance and grace of manners."

In the language of the memorial sermon upon the death of my late lamented wife; "In the strictest sense of the words, and with the nicest measurement of their force, she may be described as a woman of eminent gifts and graces. Her mental endowments were of a superior class. Few kept pace with her, in the scholarship of youth, and in subsequent life, she wielded an unusually facile and graphic pen," while her mind was

stored with rich treasures of thought, acquired by reading and observation.

To this it may be added that "discrimination, judgment, discretion; the quality which we denominate, *sterling* good sense, was her characteristic trait. Seldom is one met with her equal," in this respect.

And what was more, "She was the thoughtful, sympathising liberal friend of the poor; constantly bearing them in mind, entering into their circumstances and feelings, and contributing to their relief; and yet, so unostentaneous, was she, in the beneficence she practiced, as to conceal from her own family the charities she bestowed."

"As a daughter and a sister, as a wife and a parent, as a woman and a christian, there was an *affectionateness*, a disinterestedness, a quietness, a steadiness, a delicacy, a discretion, a general completeness, so to speak about her, that made it hard to blame and dislike, but easy and almost irresistible to commend and love her."

Rev. Dr. Boardman, her former Pastor, speaking of her death in a letter to me, says: "Our good and much afflicted friend Mrs. Hough has gone home. She had much excellence of character, and as to her orthodoxy, it was never questioned." What he implies by her being "much afflicted," was the physical infirmity and decay which so long previous to her death, clustered around her loved and attenuated form so as nearly to suspend the active energies of the soul. In this affliction she had *tribulation*; and who passes the meridian of life without it? But her heart was not troubled neither was it afraid.

Her's, as we doubt not, was "the death of the right-

eous," and her entrance into the heavenly rest sure and triumphant. Years of uniform attachment to her Saviour, unwavering faith in his all atoning sacrifice, and a full consecration of herself to his service were the pledges in a dying hour, that she was accepted of him and entered at once into his immediate and blissful presence.

" There in the soft and beautiful belief,
Flows the true Lether for the lips of grief ;
There o'er bright gates inscribed, no more to part,
Soul springs to soul, and heart unites to heart !"

" Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil."

How consoling then to her bereaved husband, her sorrowing children, and many pious friends ; in all whose hearts her memory is richly embalmed, to think of her as now released from the multiplied sorrows of earth, and made perfect with the ransomed millions, before the throne of God ! Where as " clothed in white " and walking the bright green fields of Paradise, she has recognized, I doubt not, and been recognized by many within the circle of relationship whil'st on earth, and who had preceeded her to the abodes of the blessed.

This doctrine of the heavenly recognition, presents a most interesting feature of the inheritance of the saints in light.

It is not only at once to know those we knew on earth when meeting them in the world of Glory ; but intuitively to know others of the celestial inhabitants of whom we had heard or read, but never saw.

Hence the Patriarchal, the Prophets, the Martyrs and Apostles, and other saints of eminent character, whose names were known to her only of history, she now recognizes among "the great multitude which no man can number," who worship and bow down in heaven.

Nor can we exclude from that assembly of "just men made perfect," through the efficacy of atoning blood, the holy angels whom she distinctly recognizes, of having been "ministering spirits to the Churches," and some of them her guardian angels, to defend her from dangers, and comfort her in afflictions, while she was on this side of the Jordan.

With disinterestedness and feelings of deep admiration and unspeakable pleasure, she beheld, we doubt not, those angels who as "the morning stars sang together, and as the sons of God shouted for joy," at the birth of creation; and those moreover, who announced the nativity of our Saviour to the shepherds on the plains of Bethlehem, "Praising God and saying Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace and good will to men."

And there a disembodied spirit, freed from pain, sickness and sorrow she "walks the golden streets," and freely mingles with other spirits pure as God is pure, hearing the "harpers harping with their harps," the songs of "joy, purity and praise!"

Then why, O! why, for a moment, should we wish the beloved woman, whose character and death we memorialize, this evening, back to the dull formalities and multiplied sorrows of this earthly abode? Would we, even if we could, recall her pure and happy spirit from that exalted society of saints and seraphs, to the

unsatisfying scenes of this bleak and unhospitable earth? No; rather would we bid that spirit rest and reign around and upwards with the ransomed millions there, until *we*, by the ever vivifying grace of God, are prepared to rise and join in the joys unspeakable and full of Glory that heaven affords to its adoring inhabitants.

And why, in view of life's transcient date, on the one hand, and of the permanence of things unseen and eternal on the other, should we not "double our diligence to make our calling and election sure, that so an abundant entrance may be ministered unto us, into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ?"

That kingdom, as we are assured, is righteousness, peace, joy in the Holy Ghost. It comprises all that is worth living for, and all for which, we should be willing to die, as our friends have died who are now in heaven, and beyond the reach of earth's vicissitudes, and all terrestrial sufferings.

Now, "thanks be unto God, for His unspeakable gift," that of His well beloved Son, through whom we may have pardon, sanctification and life eternal.

Then farewell to "to this dusky sphere which men call earth," as "we have here no certain abiding place," life being but "a vapour, which appeareth for a little time and then vanisheth away."

